

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8492

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 01376

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, AR

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT US INTERCEDE WITH ARGENTINES ON
UK'S BEHALF

1. IN LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE JANUARY 27, FCO PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TED ROWLANDS APPEALED FOR US HELP IN COLVINING THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT OF HMG'S GOOD FAITH IN ITS CONDUCT TOWARDS THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. ROWLANDS EMPHASIZED THAT PARLIAMENTARY OPINION COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY COMPROMISE OF BRITAIN'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLANDS WITHOUT THE ASSENT OF THE ISLANDERS THEMSELVES. AT THE SAME TIME, BRITAIN RECOGNIZES THAT IT IS VIRTUALLY INCAPABLE OF DEFENDING THE FALKLANDS AGAINST A MILITARY INCURSION. ROWLANDS CLAIMED IT ONLY FOLLOWS THAT HMG EFFORTS TO FIND A MIDDLE GROUND ARE GENUINE. THE SHACKLETON COMMISSION TO PORT STANLEY WAS DEVISED TO RE-INFORCE FALKLANDS-ARGENTINE COOPERATION BY DEMONSTRATING THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE ARCHIPELAGO COULD ONLY BE FOUND IN CLOSER TIES WITH THE MAINLAND. YET, ROWLANDS LAMENTED, THE ARGENTINES HAVE CHOSEN TO MISINTERPRET HMG'S INTENTIONS DESPITE NUMEROUS ASSURANCES. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENTAL DISARRAY IN BUENOS AIRES -- NOT TO MENTION THE MUSICAL CHAIRS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY -- HAS NOT ABETTED CLEAR CHANNELS OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, ROW-

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LANDS WAS NEVERTHELESS AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN ARGENTINA'S

PERSISTENT SUSPICIONS.

2. ROWLANDS HOPES THAT THE US, PERHAPS THROUGH EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES, WILL UNDERTAKE TO PERSUADE THE ARGENTINES OF HMG'S SINCERITY. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE TWO POINTS MADE: A) THE SHACKLETON COMMISSION VEILED NO SINISTER, ULTERIOR MOTIVES; B) BOTH LONDON AND BUENOS AIRES SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THEIR RELATIONS FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMBASSADORS.

3. COMMENT: THE BRITISH BELIEVE THAT THEIR APPROACH TO THE FALKLANDS HAS BEEN ENTIRELY ABOVE BOARD AND THAT THE SHACKLETON COMMISSION FITS NEATLY WITH THE DESIGN AT THE BASIS OF THEIR UNDERSTANDING WITH ARGENTINA. THEY ARE ALSO AWARE THAT THE ARGENTINE MILITARY, WITH A FLICK OF THE SWAGGER STICK, COULD SEIZE THE ISLANDS AND THEREBY CAUSE YET ANOTHER CRISIS WHICH THIS GOVERNMENT IS ILL EQUIPPED TO HANDLE. END COMMENT.

4. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES COMMENTS ON ADVISABILITY OF APPROACH TO ARGENTINES.

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